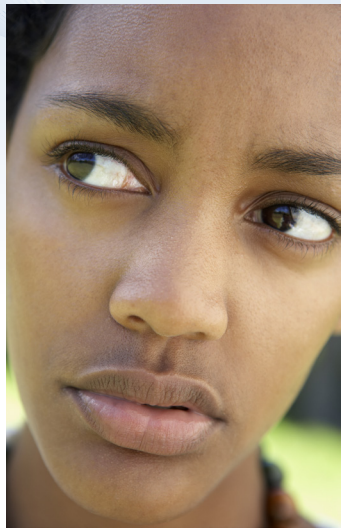


POST-FOSTER CARE SERVICES

The troubling reality is that approximately one-fourth of the foster children reviewed by the CPRB will age out of the system without finding permanency. This limits their options as they transition into the adult world without the safety net of a stable family. These young people often need additional, outside support. Although resources are scarce, Delaware does offer two programs to assist young people who have left the foster care system.



The ASSIST Program

Legislation passed in 2013 funded the ASSIST program to administer needs-based stipends for living costs for youth who have aged out of foster care. The CPRB has included questions in its comprehensive reviews to ensure that children in care learn about their eligibility and the program’s requirements. At the 2013 CPRB Annual Meeting, Julie Miller, from the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative, described the program and spoke about the needs experienced by youth aging out of foster care. The CPRB now hears appeals by youth in the event they are not satisfied with the actions taken on their ASSIST requests.

Davis Scholarships

The CPRB administers the Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund, which supports post-secondary education for students who have been in Delaware’s foster care system. Named in honor of an early member of the CPRB, the Davis Scholarships are funded by the state. These funds make up the match that enables Delaware to qualify for the federal Chafee grants under the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program.

This year, a total of \$171,038 was disbursed from the two programs; 58 recipients benefitted from the awards. Thirty-three (33) recipients were attending four-year colleges; 22 were in two-year or community college programs; and 3 engaged in other post-secondary education. Acceptable academic performance is

required for maintaining this support, which allows former foster children to limit the amount of debt they take on for post-secondary education. This year, three recipients graduated from four-year institutions, and two graduated from two-year or community college programs. Two other recipients graduated from post-secondary beauty schools.

The CPRB, which administers the Davis Scholarships and the ETV programs in conjunction with DFS, met with members of the Joint Finance Committee to support additional funding for the Davis Scholarship. This year’s funding represents an increase of \$25,000 the first increase since the program’s inception in 1989. Efforts to increase funding received a significant boost from the testimony of a former foster child who has now graduated from college. Information on this program can be found at the Davis Scholarships page at <http://courts.delaware.gov/cprb/scholarship.htm>.

PARTNERING WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In addition to implementing the two-tier review system to better serve the needs of DFS and Family Court, the CPRB has forged closer ties to other agencies, including the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). The YRS director has also worked with CPRB to improve interface between the two agencies and increase YRS participation in CPRB reviews.

The CPRB continues to welcome opportunities to forge partnerships with other state agencies and with independent groups to develop stronger programming in the child welfare area. In FY2014, these included:

- Casey Family Programs, the nation’s largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families across America.
- Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC).
- Community advisory meetings, a shared effort with YRS, DFS, and Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (PBHS).
- Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative.
- Inter-Agency Coalition on Adoption (IACOA).
- Juvenile Justice Committee.
- National Foster Care Review Consortium.

- Parent Information Center.

LOOKING AHEAD

The CPRB continues to be concerned about the significant number of older children in foster care and the high proportion of youth aging out of the system with-

out finding permanency. For this reason, Review Panels have integrated some of the questions developed through the Casey Family Program’s Permanency Roundtable Skills (PRS) initiative into the comprehensive reviews. Reviews include questions about what has been tried before, options that have never been tried, and ideas that can be implemented concurrently. The questions also include one about how the Review Panel can engage the youth in planning for his or her own permanency.

In conjunction with the use of PRS questions, the CPRB has begun collecting data on barriers to permanency. Data from February through June in FY2014 are beginning to suggest some trends, but more longitudinal data are needed to support any actions. These data will continue to be collected through FY2015 with the hope that clearer understanding of the barriers to permanency will lead to shared, cross-agency solutions that help children and youth grow up in stable, permanent settings instead of remaining in the system until they turn 18.

While comprehensive reviews offer a full picture of the status and needs of most children in care, many older or special-needs children need additional

BOARD MEMBERS

The primary work of the CPRB is to review the placement and progress of children in foster care. These reviews are conducted by citizen volunteers with backgrounds in education, mental health, law, medicine, and other professions, all of whom have demonstrated commitment to and knowledge of the issues facing children in care. The Review Panels of the CPRB are listed below.

NEW CASTLE 1: Anne Kauffman <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Sunnie Moon Mary Jo Wolfe	NEW CASTLE 6: Kellie Fresolone <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Gail Allen <i>Presiding Officer</i> Wilberta Lewis Mike Rezac	Louise Henry Pat Lyons	Helen Rubin Katie Ryan Gloria Saunders Robert Undercuffler
Eddi Ashby Marion Gibbs Mary Morgan Kathy Welde	NEW CASTLE 4: Robert Hamilton <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Christie DiGuglielmo Mildred Hamilton Carolyn Karney	KENT 3: Mary Austria <i>Presiding Officer</i>	SUSSEX 3: Mike Norton <i>Presiding Officer</i>	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Carolyn Walker <i>Chair</i>
NEW CASTLE 2: Nancy Czeiner <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Rita Anderson Pamela Facciolo	Joan Chandler <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Candace Mebane Linda Paradee Dana Stonesifer Deborah Zych	Gary Breakwell Cheryl Mitchell Rita Nelson Cora Norwood-Selby Ruth Tull	Judy Mellen <i>First Vice Chair</i>
Caroline Bither Lou Hilele Reich Katie Ryan	NEW CASTLE 5: Jean Marie Leonard <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Kathy Goldsmith Barbara Grieco Pietropaulo	KENT/SUSSEX: Virginia VanSciver <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Newly appointed and not yet assigned to a Review Panel: Lisa Brewington Andrew Wilson	Martha Brooks <i>Second Vice Chair</i>
NEW CASTLE 3: Sandra Countley <i>Presiding Officer</i>	Tanya Bell-Hynson Elenor Blackman Rich Briden Candace Charkow Susan Edgar	David Miller <i>Presiding Officer</i> Jessie Cathey Jean King Cindy Montejo Rodney Smith Christella St. Juste	Judith Catterton Judith Mellen Raymond Moore Neal Tash	RESIGNED: Rita Anderson Christie DiGuglierlmo Carolyn Eanes David Miller Linda Paradee	Bonnie Maull <i>Personnel Officer</i> Barbara Blair Joseph Dell’Olio Robert Hamilton Cindy Montejo Michael Norton Neal Tash
Mary Angerer Lanette Edwards Ernestine Jones Ian Liston	NEW CASTLE 7: Debbie Sydnor Linda Wright	KENT 2:	SUSSEX 1: Sandra Lord <i>Presiding Officer</i>		

STAFF: Shane O’Hare, *Executive Director*; Linda Lampinen, *Review Coordinator Supervisor*; Megan Caudell, Lisa Cookson, Jessica Johnston, Denise Partridge, Amy Wilburn, *Review Coordinators*; Kathryn Toole, *Administrative Assistant II*; Sarah Bowers, *Administrative Assistant I*.

The CPRB acknowledges the support of DFS in furnishing data used in this report. This report has been produced by popdot, which is a public-private partnership training former foster children and other underprivileged youth for employment in the printing industry.

attention. For them, comprehensive reviews will be structured to include more focused background information and questions designed to analyze longstanding challenges, particularly in the areas of educational performance, behavioral/mental health needs, and high placement turnover. These focused reviews will be an area of development in FY2015. Requests for focused reviews will be welcomed from Family Court and other partnering agencies, including service providers. In response to such a request, the CPRB will gather input from a range of agencies and sources, working to devise a cooperative approach that can meet significant unmet needs in the life of children who have been under-served in the system, habitually avoid school, experience behavioral problems, or struggle with emotional issues.

Internal efficiencies, while not of broad general interest, have been effected because they contribute to the ability of the CPRB to address the needs of children in care more quickly and with more depth. The pursuit of administrative efficiency will continue with the goal of improving direct service and reducing the time required to respond to requests.

Child Placement Review Board

OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE



Annual Report

FY2014 (JULY 2013-JUNE 2014)

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CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE



tier of this approach, continues in all three counties, and work is under way to develop methods of in-depth analysis in critical areas. These changes have been developed in concert with the Foster Care Review Task Force, which was created at the suggestion of the Joint Sunset Commission when it renewed the CPRB charter.

The CPRB worked with members of the 147th General Assembly to achieve an increase in funding for the Ivyane D.F. Davis Scholarships. The agency also supported the passage of “An Act to Amend Title 31 of the Delaware Code Relating to the Child Placement Review Act” and “An Act to Amend Title 10 and Title 31 Pertaining to Placement of Dependent Children.”

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

DFS continues to be the primary agency responsible for placement and provision of services to Delaware’s foster children. DFS case workers evaluate children who enter care, develop permanency plans for them, and supervise their placements while in care. The CPRB is charged with reviewing the plans and placements for these children to ensure that they receive all needed medical and dental care, their placements are both safe and appropriate, educational needs are being addressed, and permanency plans are realistic and are being followed with urgency.

In recent years, improvements in the DFS system have translated into shorter times in foster care. The majority of children who enter foster care find

OVERVIEW

The Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) has achieved several important goals in FY2014; foremost among them is the implementation of a two-tier review system designed to focus greater attention on cases with greater need. The agency also worked to respond to the needs of its partners in Delaware’s child welfare system and to streamline its internal processes to expedite review scheduling and reporting.

The mission of the CPRB is to review children in foster care, those in certain adjudicated placements, and children who are placed in settings with adjudicated youth. In direct service to Delaware’s children in care, CPRB Review Panels completed 679 reviews this year. These reviews included:

- 628 reviews of the placement and services for children in foster care.
- 47 reviews of the provision of services and placement to adjudicated youth.
- 4 reviews of the safety of children who are under the jurisdiction of the state and housed in facilities with adjudicated youth.

The CPRB has fully implemented the first tier (paper reviews) of the new two-tier review process to improve its support of Family Court and the Division of Family Services (DFS).

Implementation of comprehensive reviews, the second

permanency within two years. When a child is on this trajectory, the CPRB now monitors this child with a ‘paper review,’ which does not require the attendance of the DFS case worker. In this type of review, the CPRB review coordinator amasses all relevant information about the child, much of it furnished by DFS, and the CPRB Review Panel evaluates the file to ensure that the child’s needs are being met in a timely way. When this is the case, a simple report to that effect is sent to DFS, Family Court, and Interested Parties.

However, when a paper review triggers questions about the child’s placement, educational attainment, time or turnover in care, a return to the system after a failed permanency attempt, or other concerns, the CPRB can schedule a comprehensive review for that child. This kind of review can also be requested by Family Court or a referring agency. In a comprehensive review, the DFS caseworker is expected to participate and discuss details of the case with the CPRB Review Panel. Reports on these in-depth reviews include recommendations for future action; these reports are submitted to DFS, any other referring agency, and Family Court within 15 business days of the review.

Foster Care Reviews

In FY2014, the CPRB conducted 60 paper reviews. These reviews were introduced in New Castle County in August 2013, Kent County in December 2013, and Sussex County in May 2014. In addition, 568 comprehensive reviews were completed by CPRB Review Panels. This total of 628 reviews of foster children is down from 720 reviews in FY2013 and reflects an overall reduction in the number of children in the foster care system. In FY2014, the total DFS census for the year was 1153, a reduction from the FY2013 census of 1298.

Most children enter foster care for one of three reasons: neglect, dependency, or abuse. Dependency caused 82% of the entries into foster care in FY2014; it is defined as a situation in which the parent cannot provide for the child’s physical, mental, and/or emotional needs because of the parent’s own homelessness, incarceration, or emotional problems. Neglect, in which a parent has the capability to care for the child but does not furnish adequate supervision, has substance abuse problems, or suffers from physical or mental instability, caused 12% of children to enter care. Abuse, physical, sexual, or emotional, resulted in the entry of 4% of those in care.

CPRB data from reviewed foster children show that:



- The foster care population is quite evenly split by gender, with 49% being girls and 51% boys.
- Racially, 53% were African-American, 34% Caucasian, 6% Hispanic, 6% unknown, and 1% biracial.
- Age distribution indicates that 48% of the girls and 51% of the boys are 12 or older.

Current placements generally follow the patterns established in previous years, although FY2014 showed an increase in the use of specialized foster placements to address medical or mental health issues (14%, up from 11% in FY2013). Use of conventional foster homes decreased this year to 50% of placements, down from 54% in FY2013.

Number of Placements

The number of placements is an important index to the stability of a child’s life in foster care. In FY2014, 20% of the state’s foster children had experienced a single placement, and another 24% had two placements during their time in care. Thus, 44% of the foster care population had a history of only one or two placements. DFS is to be commended for achieving this level of stability for Delaware’s foster children.

However, more than one third of the children in foster care have had five or more placements. This creates a pattern of upheaval and readjustment that takes a toll on a child’s ability to form natural attachments to adults, playmates, or school situations.

The large proportion of children with very high placement turnover is a longstanding problem in Delaware, and the CPRB finds it disturbing that there

has been no significant improvement in this situation. Continuing efforts to reduce the number of placements are an important part of improving services to foster children. The CPRB is hopeful that in-depth, focused reviews can help identify a child’s needs and the reasons for placement instability in an effort to find placements that work over the long term.

This table shows a summary of the number of placements for children who were reviewed in FY2014.

Number of Placements	Percentage of Population
1	20%
2	24%
3	15%
4	8%
5-9	20%
10-14	8%
15-19	2%
20-24	2%
25 or more	1%
	100%

Aging Out

Children leave foster care for a variety of reasons, from family reunification to adoption to aging out. Among children reviewed in FY2014, however, a troubling reality was clear: approximately one fourth aged out without finding permanency. These are children for whom no permanent placement was found, and they continued to live in the foster care world until they reached the age of 18. This group often coincides with the children who have high placement turnover. For these reasons, a comprehensive review is scheduled for each child who has been in foster care for 24 months or more as well as for any child whose trajectory suggests that he or she will be in foster care for the long term.

Comprehensive Reviews

The comprehensive review focuses attention and programmatic resources on the educational and independent living needs of children who are growing up in the system. The comprehensive review can ask

the following questions: What are the barriers to permanency for this child? How can he or she be encouraged to continue in school? How will predictable needs for life skills training be met? In addition, the comprehensive review is a tool to be sure children who are growing up in the system receive the opportunities that the state now offers, such as Independent Living programming and the ASSIST Program (Achieving Self-Sufficiency and Independence through Supported Transition).

ADJUDICATED YOUTH

Forty-seven (47) comprehensive reviews were held for adjudicated youth, cases in which Family Court has assigned placement arrangements to Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS), another division of the Department of Services to Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF). Two reviews involved female offenders, and 45 reviewed males. Ethnically, 25 (55%) were African-American, 15 (32%) Caucasian, 4 (9%) Hispanic, and 2 (4%) other.

Data show that only 5 of the 47 reviewed youth (11%) are housed in Delaware; 28 youth (60%) are placed in Pennsylvania, and the other 14 (29%) are in four other states. Out-of-state facilities are employed when Delaware does not have sites with the appropriate services. Nancy Dietz, Director of YRS, attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of the CPRB to discuss this issue of mutual concern. YRS is reviewing programming to see if in-state facilities can be modified to offer appropriate options.

Placements are based on the primary issue that brought the youth into the Family Court system. For this year’s 47 reviewed cases, the programming emphasis is as follows:

- Behavior management: 33 youth (70%).
- Sex offender treatment: 11 cases (23%).
- Transitional living placement: 2 young people (4%).
- Chemical dependency: 1 case (2%).

MIXING REVIEWS

The CPRB also conducted four mixing reviews, designed primarily to address safety issues for young people who are housed in settings that accommodate both adjudicated and non-adjudicated youth. These reviews focus on the adequacy of safeguards for the protection of non-adjudicated youth in the setting and the presence of a risk-management plan by the supervising entity.